Guidelines for Performance Measures and Progress Reports
DNA Backlog Reduction Program

Grantees agree to provide semi-annual progress reports when they sign the award document and accept all special conditions (which specify that progress reports and performance measures must be provided). It is recommended that all grantees of this program use the Report Document for all progress reports.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are defined within the solicitation, and are submitted semi-annually in the progress reports.

The Data Collection Plan

A Data Collection Plan is a required part of each DNA Backlog Reduction program application. Please read the solicitation for the actual verbiage.

The data collection plan is a detailed description of the grantee's plan for collecting the data for the required performance measures. The plan has several required components:

✓ Statement of who will be responsible for collecting, tracking, and analyzing the data.
✓ Clear description of how the data required for *each* performance measure will be collected.
✓ Statement that the data will be available for review 3 years post award, as required.
✓ Statement that the data provided is accurate, auditable, and correctly measures the impact of the federal funds awarded.

Projects that include forensic casework backlog reduction activities and objectives must also include an explanation of how the tracking and reporting methods will avoid the possibility of double counting cases affected by federal funds.

The Data Collection Plan will be reviewed thoroughly by the DNA Program Office staff during application review. The plan should be rigorous enough to ensure that the data will be accurate, auditable, and correctly measure the impact of the funds provided.

Performance measures can be put into two broad categories (capacity and casework), but all performance measures have a few things in common:

- ✓ The data must be auditable and, as such, the lab must maintain the data that supports the performance measures reflected in each semi-annual progress report.

- ✓ Most DNA laboratories have a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) that allows for accurate collection of all data metrics. If a lab has not yet implemented a LIMS, records should be maintained using Excel spreadsheets, Access databases, other software/programs, or by paper records.

- ✓ Data reported for the beginning of the award period (October 1st) should not change from one report to the next.

> *If the data reported at the beginning of the award period was discovered to have been reported in error (miscalculation, typographical error, etc.), then the data should be changed to reflect the correct number, and an explanation for the change must be given in the narrative.*

Capacity measures:

Capacity measures include *turnaround time* and the *average number of DNA samples analyzed/analyst/month*. This data should be collected for the entire Forensic DNA/ Biology unit **or** the entire DNA database unit. Grantees are required to report these two metrics for the beginning of the award period, and at the end of each 6-month reporting period. These two metrics must be reported on each progress report, regardless of fund usage.

Average turnaround time:

What is the definition of turnaround time?

Casework: Turnaround time is a measurement of the time the case is received in the forensic Biology/DNA unit of the laboratory until the delivery of the final laboratory report to the submitting agency. *It is NOT a measurement of the time the case is **assigned** to an analyst until*

BEGINNING METRICS:

Turnaround time and samples analyzed per analyst per month:

Use a 6-month average (April 1 – September 30)

the final report is delivered. The metrics for turnaround time should incorporate the entire time it takes to work a case through screening and DNA testing.

Database: For convicted offender and arrestee samples, the turnaround time is measured in business days from the time the sample is received into the laboratory to the time the sample profile is uploaded into CODIS.

This metric must be reported for the entire unit, not just analysts who are supported by the grant. <u>The turnaround time at the end of the reporting period is an average calculated over the entire reporting period</u>.

How do grantees calculate the average turnaround time for forensic biology/DNA cases or database samples for a 6-month reporting period?

1. Find the total number of forensic biology/DNA <u>cases</u> that were <u>**CLOSED during**</u> the 6-month reporting period *OR* the total number of database samples <u>**tested and uploaded**</u> to CODIS during the 6-month reporting period

2. Find the <u>total number of days all of those cases *OR* database samples were open</u> (from the day the case or sample was submitted to the lab until the day the report was delivered to the requesting agency for that case or the day the profile from the database sample was uploaded to CODIS).

3. Divide the total number of days by the total number of cases or samples closed.

<u>EXAMPLE</u>: *The lab closed 400 cases from July 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012. The total number of days those cases were open was 8,200. 8,200 days/400 cases= 20.5-day average turnaround time.*

Average samples analyzed/analyst/month:
What is the average number of samples analyzed per analyst per month?

Casework: The average samples analyzed per analyst per month measures the average number of **DNA samples** that underwent analysis by each analyst in the laboratory for one month. The samples to be included in this calculation are only *forensic samples* (questioned samples) and *known reference samples*.

This metric should only count samples that undergo DNA analysis, and should not include any screening or preliminary testing samples.

This metric should report *samples* tested, not *cases* or *requests.* The laboratory must have a mechanism in place to track samples worked. Most grantees find that recording the number of samples from extraction logs or injection logs is an easy way to collect this data if the LIMS is not set up to track samples per analyst. For smaller laboratories, it may be easiest to set up a dedicated sample tracking spreadsheet for all

analysts to use. It is not acceptable to estimate samples per case and report an estimated number of samples based on the number of cases completed per analyst.

Database: For analysts in the database unit, the actual number of offender samples tested should be used in the calculation. Quality control samples (positive and negative controls, blanks, etc.) should not be included. For analysts who work casework *and* database samples, these two sample types must be able to be separated for the purpose of accurate reporting for this metric.

This metric must be reported for the entire DNA unit (casework <u>or</u> database) not just analysts who are supported by the grant. Casework samples and database should not be added together. These must be reported separately. <u>The samples analyzed per analyst per month at the end of the reporting period metric should be an average calculated over the entire reporting period.</u>

> ### *How do grantees calculate the average number of samples analyzed per DNA analyst per month for a 6-month reporting period?*
>
> 1. *Calculate the total number of DNA samples (either forensic and known reference samples **OR** offender samples) analyzed for the entire 6-month reporting period.*
> 2. *Divide by the number of analysts that worked those samples.*
> 3. *Divide by six.*

Casework and database analysis metrics:

Casework and database analysis metrics include *backlogged cases* and *database samples, cases* and *database samples worked using federal grant funding, profiles entered into CODIS* and *CODIS hits* from cases and samples worked with federal funding.

Grantees are required to report the backlog of cases or database samples at the beginning of the award period and at the end of each 6-month reporting period, but the cases/database samples analyzed, profiles uploaded, and CODIS hits recorded are only to be reported when funds have been used to support these activities.

There is a Grant-Funded Analyst metric question for activities completed by grant-funded criminalists, analysts, scientists, or screeners. Because adding personnel is considered a capacity enhancement objective, their activities need to be reported separately. See below for further guidance on this metric.

Backlogged cases or database samples:
What is the definition of a backlogged case/database sample?

A backlogged case is one that has not had a final report issued to the submitting agency within 30 days of submission to the forensic DNA/Biology unit.

A backlogged database samples is one that has not been uploaded to CODIS/NDIS within 30 days of submission to the DNA Database unit.

Backlog data should reflect the entire backlog of cases in the Forensic DNA/Biology unit or the backlog of offender samples in the Database unit.

The Program Office has provided a backlog calculator which will assist the laboratories with tracking backlogs and preparing this data for grant applications.

Cases and/or database samples analyzed:
When should cases and/or database samples analyzed be reported?

This metric should only be reported for cases and/or samples analyzed through the use of federal funds for specific activities. The data reported should be the number of cases or database samples analyzed <u>using federal funds for overtime, supplies, or outsourcing</u> during the 6-month period only, not the total number of cases analyzed in the section for the reporting period, and not the number of cases analyzed using federal funds for the entire award period.

All screening and DNA cases receiving federal assistance through one of the three activities listed above should be used to determine this metric, and the number of

Cases vs. Requests

The DNA Program Office requires grantees to report these numbers in terms of **CASES**, not requests for analysis.

The Program Office understands that it can be very difficult to track per case and not per request; however, the performance measures ask for cases aided by grant funding, not requests. Counting multiple requests per case as being grant-aided allows cases to be double-counted.

To report the number of requests worked, grantees should use the narrative to describe those numbers and how they differ from what is in the metrics.

Backlog reduction activities where casework metrics have to be reported include:

- ✓ Use of overtime for case and/or database sample analysis.
- ✓ Purchase and use of supplies for case and/or database sample analysis.
- ✓ Utilization of outsourcing for cases and/or database samples.

CODIS profiles uploaded, as well as number of CODIS hits that occurred as a result of grant funds. For laboratories where the screening and DNA testing is conducted by two separate units, cases screened by analysts using supplies or overtime that are submitted to the DNA unit or submitted for grant-funded outsourcing due to detectable body fluids should be counted only once. The same would apply to those cases which have no detectable body fluids that are subjected to DNA analysis in-house or by outsourcing.

The DNA Backlog Reduction program requires that grantees work at least one case for every $1,000 in overtime funds and supply funds used to analyze cases in-house. Each grantee that utilizes funds for more than one of these activities, as well as for federally funded serologists or DNA analysts, must have a tracking mechanism in place to ensure that double-counting of casework does not occur. Tracking casework metrics for these awards becomes more important now that the Special Condition for prior year funds has been eliminated. Cases, profiles, and hits should only be reported for ONE of the three activities listed above for ONE award, regardless of whether or not the Overtime is funded from one award and the Supplies were funded from a different award.

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Double-counting is not allowed. Grantees should take caution in the situations below to avoid double-counting.
When might double-counting of casework metrics occur?

1.   Cases analyzed on federally funded overtime using federally funded supplies.
2.   Cases outsourced using federal funds that are either previously screened or subsequently reviewed using federally funded overtime.
3.   Cases outsourced using federal funds that are subsequently reviewed by a fully federally funded analyst.
4.   Cases analyzed via a fully federally funded DNA analyst who uses federally funded supplies or federally funded overtime.
5.   Cases analyzed via federally funded supplies or overtime that were first analyzed via a fully federally funded screener or serologist.

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If reporting cases worked via overtime for one award when the supplies were funded from a different award, the grantee must note in both narratives that the cases were worked using funds from two different awards. The report that has no cases

indicated when casework funds were utilized must be especially clear to state that the cases were counted in another report.

Grantees should note that using funds for overtime from one award and funds for supplies from another award is NOT comingling. An example of comingling is when the grantee takes all of the supply funds requested from one award and all of the supply funds from another award and dumps them into a communal "pot" of money which the agency uses to pay supply invoices. Comingling of funds is not allowable. Most laboratories track cases worked with overtime on their time and attendance sheets, in LIMS, or in an Excel spreadsheet. Cases worked with federal supplies are usually tracked using the lot number of the amplification kits, as the kits are the primary expense. Quantification kits or extraction kits may be used as tracking means if no amplification kits are requested. Some agencies add a code sequence to the case number or CODIS profile uploaded which denotes that the case received federal assistance. This sequence is unique to the award and could be used in a LIMS, Excel spreadsheet, database, or paper-tracking system.

Samples uploaded to CODIS and CODIS hits obtained:

Data collection for this metric starts with the analysis of cases or database samples analyzed using federal funds for one of the three activities listed in the Cases Analyzed section above. If a unique code is used when entering profiles to CODIS for samples that received federal assistance, accurate data is easily obtained by the CODIS administrator, who can run a query for these two measures based on the dates of the reporting period.

Profiles that are uploaded to CODIS and CODIS hits attributable to one of the three activities listed above must be reported in this metric. Profiles uploaded and hits occurring solely from federal assistance provided by

How to Answer the Grant-Funded Analyst Question:

- Grantees that do not have funded analysts, serologists, technicians, or contract personnel: *enter "N/A"*

- Grantees that fund a technician only: **enter "See narrative."**
  In the narrative, describe how the technician impacts the DNA/Biology section. Do not include their contributions in the mandatory casework questions.

- Grantees that have fully funded grant screeners or serologists: **enter the number of cases the screener or serologist analyzed that were not impacted by other federal funds, as well as any profiles uploaded or hits recorded that were a direct result of the screened cases.**

- Grantees that have fully funded grant DNA analysts who are analyzing cases without the addition of federally funded Supplies or Overtime, or without screening by fully funded serologists: **enter the number of cases analyzed, the number of profiles uploaded from those cases, and the number of CODIS hits arising from those profiles uploaded.** *Example: "25 cases, 13 profiles, 2 hits"*

- Grantees that have fully funded DNA analysts who analyze only cases that are impacted by other federal funds (Supplies, Overtime, or Supplies): **enter "NA - the casework metrics include the contributions of all allowable federal funding categories."**
  In the narrative, describe why the grant-funded analyst metric was not answered when there are fully funded analysts on the award. *Example: "All funded analysts used federally funded supplies to work cases."*

funded analysts should be reported in the Grant-Funded Analyst metric. See below.

The grantee should not report *all* profiles uploaded to CODIS and *all* CODIS hits for the laboratory for this question.

Grant-funded analyst metric:

Grantees report the number of cases completed, profiles uploaded to CODIS, and CODIS hits from analysis by the fully federally funded analysts on that award.

In GMS, this metric question must have an answer entered before the report can be submitted. See the sidebar "How to Answer the Grant-Funded Analyst Question" for correct ways to answer this question, as the answer depends on how the grantee utilizes their award funds.

This metric question was added in FY 09. Because the purpose of grant performance measures is to capture the impact of federal funds on the grantee as well as the community, this question was added to capture information that the program had not collected previously.

The data collected for this question is subject to #4 and #5 of the "When might double-counting of casework metrics occur?" information box above. If grantees utilize federally funded grant analysts as well as federally funded supplies or overtime for the funded analysts to use, then they must have a tracking mechanism in place to ensure double-counting does not occur. <u>Any cases (as well as profiles and hits) analyzed via the overtime or supplies used MUST be reported in the mandatory casework metrics, and not in the Grant-Funded Analyst question</u>.

General Comments

If the recommended Progress Report Document is used for reporting, there is no need to also enter the performance metrics in GMS. Grantees should enter "see attached" in the GMS performance metrics fields, and provide the information solely in the Progress Report Document. However, if the Progress Report Document is not used, the performance metric must be entered into the GMS performance metric module.

In GMS, the metrics should be answered only with a number and a label. For example, "10 cases." Any explanation of the metrics should be only in the narrative. In the Progress Report Document, only the numbers should be put into the table unless the grantee has to separate out subgrantee metrics.

If at any point during an award period the grantee finds an error in previously reported data, the grantee should either submit a Special Request report in GMS that shows the corrected data in their Progress Report (corrected data possibly in a colored font or with an asterisk to denote the change), with no new narrative in the document except for the reason for the change with the asterisk or colored font key; or the grantee should correct the data in their Progress Report, coloring the corrected data a different

color or putting an asterisk in, and then write a brief reason for the change in the narrative for the current reporting period.

If totals are given in the narrative for the entire DNA or biology unit and include any non-grant-funded cases, this needs to be made clear. For example: "The DNA unit worked 400 cases during this period, with 150 of them being worked on FY 11 grant-funded supplies and overtime, and 50 of them being worked by our grant-funded analyst."

Metrics reported by the grantee agency MUST be separated by fiscal year program. Grantees must report activities funded on one award separate from activities funded on other *DNA Backlog Reduction* awards, and activities funded through other programs. <u>Comingling of funds from two different fiscal years and programs is prohibited, and grantees must make sure they can definitively state which award funded what specific **activity**</u>. The grantee is allowed to use different awards to pay for different casework activities at the same time (i.e., overtime and supplies), but the funds for each activity from *different awards* must stay separate. Please contact the Program Manager with any questions.

NIJ understands that validations, analysis, and implementation of new equipment may take longer than the award period, so the final impact of capacity enhancement activities may not be known until long after the project period has ended. NIJ encourages grantees to continue to submit success stories to the program manager after the award's project period has ended.

Performance measures given in the narrative of any report need to match what has been reported for the current reporting period.

Any totals given need to match totals obtained by adding data submitted in this and previous reports.

The Progress Report Narrative

The recommended Progress Report Document starts with a Goals and Objectives of Project section. This section needs to be filled out prior to the grantee writing the first narrative. The Goals and Objectives of Project come directly from the application and should be specific as to the types of activities that will be funded and the purchases that will be made under this award.

If the grantee removes or adds goals and objectives during the course of the award, the changes should be clearly documented in that section. For

A PROJECT'S SUCCESS IS NOT ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED IN THE METRICS

NIJ <u>DOES NOT</u> COMPARE METRICS FROM ONE GRANTEE TO ANOTHER.

EACH PROJECT IS EVALUATED ON ITS OWN MERIT. ACCURATE METRICS AND INCLUSIVE NARRATIVES ARE ESSENTIAL TO PROGRAM MANAGERS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PROJECT AND PROGRESS MADE.

example, objectives removed should have the font changed to **red** and '~~strike through~~'. Objectives added should be in **blue** font. All objectives or goals added or removed should have a reason for the change, like "Removed via a Budget Modification GAN approved in July 2012". Please see the "RSBI-DFS FY11 Progress Report EXAMPLE" on how to document changes to the Goals and Objectives.

The narrative for each reporting period should provide a clear picture of how funds were utilized over the course of that reporting period. While the narrative can include a discussion of the performance metrics, there should be more content than just a rehash of the metrics. Each narrative should include progress made on <u>each goal</u> of the project, activities that were funded to help accomplish those goals, challenges, changes made to the project, successes, explanations of metrics, etc. Charts or tables can be used as well.

The grantee should clearly delineate activities performed by the DNA unit that were funded by this award from any activities that were not funded by this award in the narrative so that any reader reviewing the narrative can tell how funds from this particular award were used to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the project. If a format other than the recommended Progress Report Document is used for reporting, please ensure the report contains all necessary information.

Final Reports

Final reports contain cumulative casework and grant-funded analyst metrics, capacity metrics that are an average over the last 6 months of the award, an ending backlog that is the backlog on the end date of the award, and a report narrative that is a comprehensive summary of the activities, successes, and challenges that occurred over the entire award period, as well as statements of how the award impacted the grantee's laboratory. Final reports that do not contain both cumulative metrics and a comprehensive narrative will be change requested.

In the recommended Progress Report Document, headers have been provided for a maximum award period of 3 years. If the grantee's award ends in the middle of the award period, a narrative should be written in the header that contains the months not reported on in the previous regular reports. For example, if the project period ended March 31, 2013, a brief narrative should be written in the January 1,

> **FINAL REPORT METRICS**
>
> *Turnaround time and samples/Analyst/Month:*
>
>   -Average over last 6 months of award.
>
> *Backlog:*
>
>   -Backlog on end date of award.
>
> *Casework and Grant-funded analyst metrics:*
>
>   -Cumulative metrics entered into <u>FINAL</u> column.
>
>   -Metrics over months not covered in previously submitted report entered into the correct column.
>
> For example, an FY10 award ends 3/31/13. No regular report covered the 1/1/13-3/31/13 period, so the Final report contains the metrics from 1/1/13-3/31/13 in the 1/1/13-6/30/13 column **and** the metrics from 10/1/10-3/31/13 in the FINAL column.

2013 – June 30, 2013 section that includes the January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013 progress.

Then, a narrative will be written under the Final header that includes a summary of the activities and purchases that happened under each goal and objective to achieve each goal or objective, reasons why the goal was not achieved (if applicable), and a summary of challenges and successes during the award period. Grantees should be sure to include statements that show the impact the award had on the laboratory in the Final report.

If the recommended Progress Report Document is not used, the Final narrative should contain statements and progress on the reporting period that was not covered in any previous report, as well as a Final narrative that contains everything described in the previous paragraph.

Please see the "RSBI-DFS FY11 Progress Report EXAMPLE" document on how to complete a Final report.

Points to Remember

1. Progress reports contain both metrics and a narrative.

2. Performance metrics need to be in the GMS performance metric module if the Progress Report Document is not being used.

3. Metrics need to be accurate to ensure proper assessment of the project.

4. Explanations and discussions of metrics go in the narrative of the report.

5. If the report reviewer cannot figure out why the metrics are reported as they are, the report will be change requested for the discussion and explanation to be inserted.

6. If casework metrics, database analysis metrics, or grant-funded personnel metrics are given, they must be explained in the narrative.

7. Grantees should double-check that they have followed the guidance given in this document before submitting their report.

8. Narratives must be written so that any reader can get a clear picture of how the funds were used from this award to accomplish the goals set in the application.

9. Grantees should contact the DNA Program Office with questions about performance metrics and narratives before submitting the progress report.

10. Grantees should not count on reminders from the DNA Program Office to submit their regular or Final progress reports. Regular reports are due on January 30 for the reporting period of July 1– December 31 for the year before, and July 30 for the reporting period of January 1 – June 30 of the same year. Final progress reports are due (submitted **and** approved) by the 90th day after the project period has ended.

End Notes:

All grantees are expected to follow the guidance provided in this document. The DNA Program Office reviews each and every progress report to determine it if is reasonable and within the scope of the project. However, only the grantee can be fully responsible for the accuracy of the data.

It is recommended that the LIMS printouts, Excel spreadsheets, copies of log books, etc., used to compile the data for the reporting period be kept in the grant file with each approved progress report document. This ensures compliance of maintaining auditable records and assists the auditors or assessors from NIJ, OCFO, or the OIG.

It is recommended that the grantee use the Progress Report Document. It allows easier performance metric reporting and narrative writing. It also allows the grantee and DNA Program Office to quickly assess the progress of the award. If the recommended Progress Report Document is not used for reporting, please ensure all of the information collected in the Progress Report Document is present in the format provided.

In order to obtain the recommended Progress Report Document for this program, or for any questions about the guidance given, do not hesitate to contact the DNA Program Office at the National Institute of Justice.